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To,

Samuel Harris Brewster,
Attorney General of
Pennsylvania,

With the
sincere regards of his friend,
George. E. Froh.

Philadelphia, July 31st 1867

1233 Walnut St.

Philadelphia, July 31, 67

My dear friend Benjamin, I beg
to thank you for the "counterfeit
reproduction." It is a capital
likeness; and I shall treasure
the picture, as I cherish
in my heart, all my kind-
ly remembrances of the
original.

Ever sincerely Yours
George S. Pratt

Gen. Harris Brewster Esq.

P.S. For the cause
given in my note, I have

and a few copies of my Opera
on Gettysburg (the same you
were pleased to speak of so
kindly,) printed in the present
evening; one of which I beg
to hand you here with.

I got into a fight with
one of those soldier fellows;
vide Appendix. Some

time, when you have nothing
better to do, or half an hour,
read it, and tell me if you
think I held my own with
the warrior.

T. J. L.

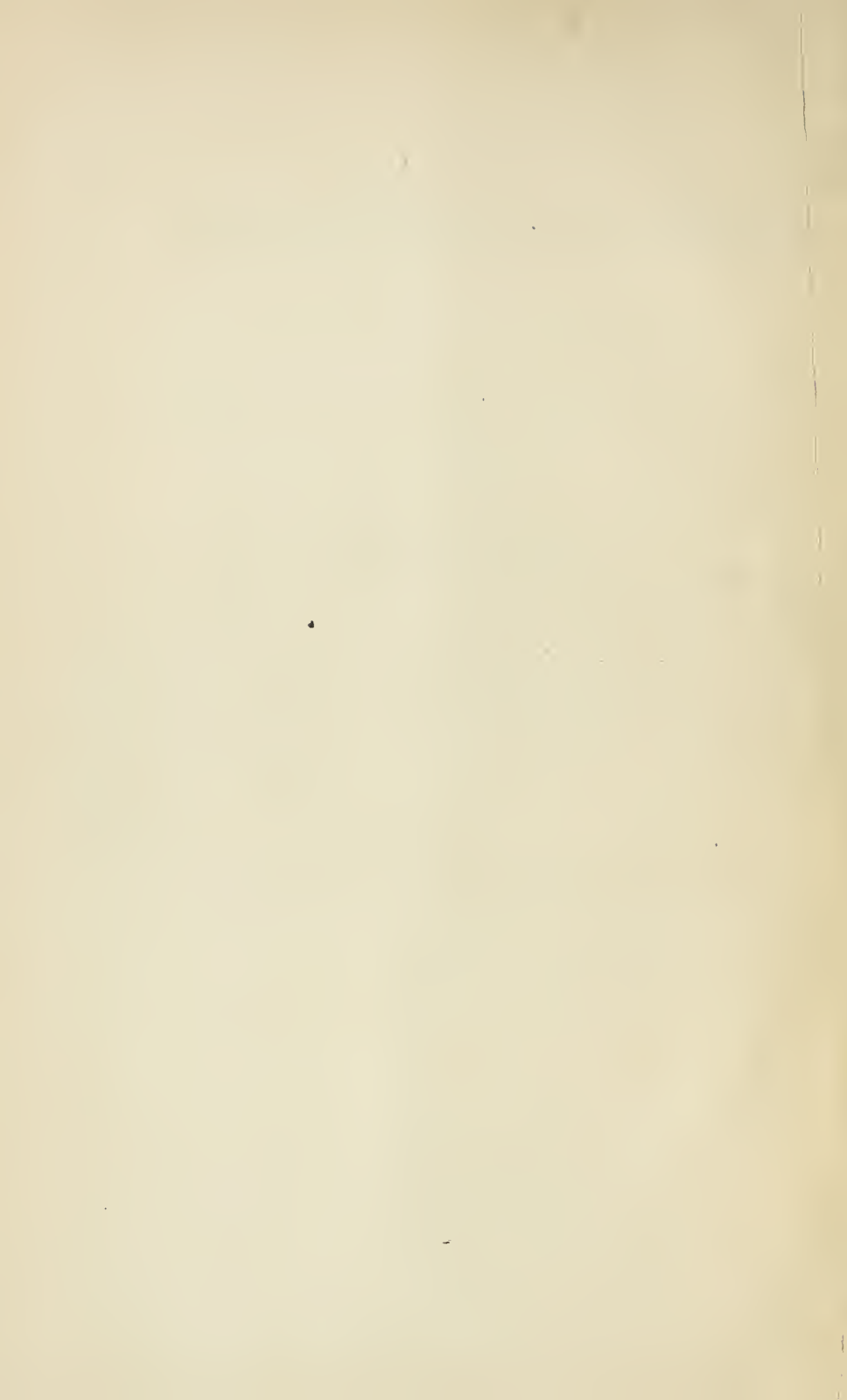
THE BATTLE-FIELD OF GETTYSBURG.

BY

GEORGE J. GROSS.

From the Philadelphia Press of Nov. 27, 1865.

PHILADELPHIA:
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NOTE.

YIELDING to the, perhaps, too partial judgment of those who have expressed an interest in my article on "The Battle-field of Gettysburg;" and with the view, moreover, of availing myself of an opportunity of making some necessary additions and corrections, I have had a few copies printed in the present shape for distribution among personal friends who regard it as deserving of a better fate than that accorded it in the ephemeral columns of a newspaper.

GEORGE J. GROSS.

PHILADELPHIA, March, 1866.

THE BATTLE-FIELD OF GETTYSBURG.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "PRESS."

SIR:—

I have just returned from a visit to Gettysburg, and you can, if you choose, accompany me over the field and hear what a participant in the battle has to say. In the main, I tell the story as 'twas told to me; but it is difficult to say anything new upon a theme already hackneyed. In common with others, you newspaper people have a horror of long articles; therefore, "for fear your readers should grow skittish," you have my full permission to abbreviate, omit, or expunge at your pleasure; only I beg you to bear in mind that I am attempting to describe a *three days' battle*. Assuming then this sketchy, gossipy article to have escaped your wastepaper basket, start with friend Edward Penington, Jr., and myself, this fine November morning, out the Emmettsburg road. Our companion and guide is Captain A. F. Cavada, a gallant and accomplished

young officer, who served all through from Yorktown to Petersburg, and for nearly two years on the staff of Major-Gen. Humphreys.

About a mile out we halt. The Captain *loquitur*: "Now I begin to feel at home. Let me take an observation, as these fenees were not here then. All right; I've got it now. Do you see that big walnut on the ridge over there? That was Gen. Humphreys' headquarters on the morning of Thursday, the 2d of July. Almost worn out with hard marehing, I was aroused from my weary bivouae at daylight and ordered to post Col. Tilghman's regiment (the 26th Penna.) on picket along here. Later in the day the right of our division, Carr's brigade, held this brick house. Further down was posted Turnbull's battery. Below that barn stood Seely's; and still further towards our left the batteries of the first division, under Livingston, Smith, Randolph, Clark, and Winslow. I name them all, for never were guns more effectively and beautifully handled. All suffered severely—especially Seely, who had hardly a man or horse left standing, and was himself badly wounded.

"Now go with me into that orchard. I want to find a certain apple-tree which served as a rendezvous for staff officers. Standing under it, during the day, with Captains McClellan and Humphreys, a shell exploded in the top, killing three of our poor orderlies, and wounding my horse." The tree was

found, bearing upon its trunk and branches unmistakable evidence of hard usage.

“About half-past two o’clock the whole Third Corps moved out in line of battle over this open ground, and a more magnificent spectacle of ‘living valor rolling on the foe’ I never witnessed. Away over on that bare spot of rising ground the rebels had planted two batteries, which enfiladed our whole line, fairly sweeping it from left to right. Heavens! how they pitched it into us! Longstreet’s infantry emerged from the adjacent wood, and, in a short time, all around where we are standing, to the right, left, and in front, along this road, through that peach orchard, away down towards Round Top, the battle raged.

“How well I remember this spot! I had been ordered to post Col. Burling’s brigade behind the low stone fence you see there, and, on my way back, I passed the 114th Penna. Regiment, then commanded by my brother, Lieut.-Col. F. F. Cavada. It had just been ordered to an advanced position beyond the road. I rode up and shook hands with him. ‘Good-bye, Fred; look out for yourself; you are going into a warm place, and are sure to catch it.’ So it turned out. The regiment, in connection with the 68th Penna., soon became fiercely engaged, losing heavily. My brother and his brigade commander, Gen. Gra-

ham, were both taken prisoners, the latter severely wounded.

"I never saw the rebels fight with such diabolical fury; for, notwithstanding the most murderous fire of canister, shrapnel, and musketry, poured into their very faces, on they came—nothing could stop them. Our own men, too, those heroes of Chantilly, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, never fought more unflinchingly. Upon no other part of the field was war's bloody harvest so abundantly gathered. The eye here easily takes in the boundaries both of the enemy's position and of our own; and, within this circumscribed space, on that blazing afternoon, lay more than ten thousand men!—

'Heap'd and pent;
Rider and horse—friend, foe—in one red burial blent'—

"The close and deadly nature of the conflict can be realized when we bear in mind that these appalling losses were incurred, not in charging breast-works, nor in storming entrenched positions, but in a fair stand-up fight, on level ground, without any advantage of position except the commanding ground occupied by the enemy's batteries.

"The Third Corps went into action 10,000 strong, and came out with less than 5,500!"

"Well, Captain, you participated in most of the

heavy fighting done by this army. Tell me, did you ever see hotter work than this?"

"Never but once. In the attack upon the enemy's position, at the first Fredericksburg, our division was ordered to storm the heights. As we were getting ready to move, Gen. Humphreys, always a very *polite* man, turned to his staff, and in his blandest manner remarked, 'Young gentlemen, I intend leading this assault, and shall be happy to have the pleasure of your company.' Of course, the invitation was not to be declined. *That* was the *roughest* place I was ever in—a perfect slaughter-pen. Our division lost 1100 men in fifteen minutes, and to this day it seems a miracle how any of us ever got back alive."

A word of criticism here. At one period of the battle, Birney, being hard pressed, called upon Gen. Sykes, in command of the Fifth Corps, for assistance. Sykes had been ordered to support the Third, if called upon; but he returned for answer, that "he would be up in time; that his men were tired, and were making coffee!" They *did* come up in about *an hour*; "and," says Gen. Warren, in his *testimony*, "the troops under Gen. Sykes arrived barely in time to save Round Top, and they had a very desperate fight to hold it." And again, speaking of the operations next day, "When the repulse took place, Gen.

Meade intended to move forward and assault the enemy in turn. He ordered an advance of the Fifth Corps, but it was carried on *so slowly*, that it did not amount to much, if anything." Gen. George Sykes, although a brave man, is entirely *too slow*; so at least Gen. Grant seemed to think, for, in the subsequent reorganization of the Army of the Potomac, the services of "Tardy George" No. 2 were dispensed with.*

The Fifth, as a corps, has a glorious record, and has never failed to fight bravely when properly handled.

To resume the Captain's narrative. "As the day wore on, the superior numbers of the enemy began to tell; the pressure became greater and greater, until at last our whole corps, with the exception of Carr's brigade, was pushed down the slope broken and discomfited. There," said the Captain, pointing to a clump of bushes, "my horse received a second wound and fell dead under me. I managed to scramble over the ridge, where our men were being rallied; and, soon after, the sun went down, and the rebels were beaten back beyond the Emmettsburg road. In the *mêlée*, Capt. Chester, of our military family, was seen to go down; and, after nightfall, a party started out in search of him. Near that flat rock we found him

* Gen. Sykes, in a communication which, with the reply thereto, will be found in the Appendix, defends himself against these strictures,

alive, but grievously wounded. His horse and faithful orderly were both dead beside him, and across his legs lay a rebel soldier, whom he had killed with his revolver while in the act of plundering him of his watch. He was taken up tenderly, and conveyed to the hospital on Rock Creek, where he died the next day.

“With heavy hearts we now set about the task of burying such of our poor fellows as were within reach. Always the saddest of a soldier’s duties, it was peculiarly so upon this occasion, for all felt that the rising sun would bring with it a repetition of this day’s horrors, and that, perhaps, at this very hour to-morrow, some kind comrade might be performing the same mournful office for us.

‘Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
As we steadfastly gazed on the face of the dead,
And we bitterly thought *of the morrow.*’ ”

From the Peach Orchard we struck across the declivity, passing by the spring where General Sickels received his wound.¹ The amputation of his leg was performed in a wheat field beyond, and the command of the corps devolved upon our fellow-townsmen, the lamented General David B. Birney.

Of this faithful and distinguished soldier, a general officer, himself a man of great ability and approved gallantry—in a letter now before me, writes thus: “My own judgment of Birney is, that he was the most thorough volunteer officer of the war. In coolness, knowledge of topographical configuration (a most rare and invaluable quality), and for thinking and acting under fire, he surpassed any commander under whom I ever served.”

In the course of the day we paid a visit to Mr. Sherfey's house, where we were most hospitably received. This house stands about the centre of the field, and is riddled from garret to basement. Traaces of the conflict are to be seen on every side, including the last resting-place of many poor Southerners. Mr. Sherfey's barn was burnt during the fight, and many of the wounded who sought refuge there perished in the flames. “These,” said Mrs. Sherfey, producing some tin eans, “contain peaches that were growing in our orchard over there at the time of the battle. These are *my* trophies.” In the front garden grows the beautiful shrub known as the “burning bush,” luxuriant with its crop of bright red berries, typical of the blood shed at its roots. “Take some of the berries with you and plant them,” said the kind old lady; “they will grow anywhere, and will be pleasant mementos of Gettysburg.”

We next made our way to Little Round Top, where we had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Bat-chelder. This gentleman is engaged in collecting the details of the battle, and will, no doubt, produce a book equal in interest to his great map. I was sorry to hear him say that he intends designating this as "Weed's Hill," in honor of the general who fell on its top. Honor the memory of the brave man in some other way, Colonel; but don't change this name. As "Little Round Top" it has passed into history, and so it will be known forever.

There are few finer views of the whole field than from this point, and here took place the closest and most sanguinary fighting of Thursday. Regarding it as the key of the position, Longstreet made the most furious efforts to carry it, but the cool and steady gallantry of the Fifth Corps repelled every effort with heavy loss to the assailants. On the height fought two of the noblest soldiers of the army, Cols. Vincent and Rice. The former laid down his life here; the latter at Spottsylvania, the year after. The following dispatch, dated July 3d, does infinite honor to the heart of General Meade: "I would respectfully request that Col. Strong Vincent, 33d Penna. Regiment, be made a brigadier-general of volunteers for gallant conduct in the field yesterday. He is mortally wounded, and it would gratify his friends as well as myself." Secretary Stanton at

once complied with the request, but poor Vincent did not live to hear of his promotion.

Here, too, at the early age of twenty-five, fell Col. O'Rourke, of the 140th New York. Graduating at the head of his class two years before, he was assigned to duty in the field, and soon became distinguished as an officer of rare ability. He was killed while mounted on a rock animating his men.

Fortunately the extreme left was held by that superb regiment, the 20th Maine, whose flag bears upon its folds no prouder inscription than that of "Gettysburg." Few men have achieved more honorable distinction than the commander of this gallant regiment. His career culminated in glory with Sheridan's at Five Forks; and General Chamberlain's is one of the names of the war that will survive the wreck of shoulder-straps.

Having expended the last cartridge, Chamberlain ordered his regiment to charge down the hill, and succeeded in clearing its sides with the bayonet.

The remarkable ledge of rocks known as the "Devil's Den," directly opposite Round Top, was occupied by the enemy's sharpshooters, one of whom had a perfectly safe position within the cleft, and picked off our men with fatal accuracy. The face of the boulder behind which he lay is still covered with the marks of the Miniés sent at him. One "went for him" clean through the crevice, but missed.

He was finally dislodged by a charge, and escaped through an opening to the rear. Seven rifles, it is said, were found in his hiding-place. There is *room enough* for fifty. On the slope in front of this den lie bleaching the bones of rebel dead, washed out by the rains. All the little stone walls thrown up by our men between the huge boulders are still here. In fact nothing is changed. Would that this could be said of other parts of the field! Inscriptions upon the rocks mark the spots where Vincent and Hazlett fell. The charge made by the Pennsylvania Reserves was to the right and in front of the hill.

Brigadier-General Zook and Colonel Jeffards—the latter of the 4th Michigan—were killed in the field beyond. Jeffards fell by a bayonet thrust while gallantly holding up with his own hands the colors of his regiment. Near this same field, bravely charging at the head of his “Bucktails,” we lost our Chester County neighbor, Colonel Frederick Taylor. No death in the whole army was more sincerely mourned.

We now proceed along our lines of Friday, Col. Batchelder politely acting as guide. In the little grove, close to our lines, fell General Barksdale on Thursday. This noisy, brawling rebel set out in search of his “*rights*,” and the little pile of stones here marks the spot where he is presumed to have *found* them. It is said he was intoxicated when

starting on the charge, and this may account for his reckless bravery. True or not, "the story's still extant."

The Second Corps held from here to the Cemetery. The spot is pointed out where, exposing himself like a common soldier, the intrepid Hancock received his wound. The advanced line was held by the Vermont Brigade, then commanded by Gen. Stannard, who subsequently gave an arm to the cause on the James. A pile of knapsacks—apparently just as unslung—lie mouldering here, the inscription, "16th Vermont," still visible. Even now the *débris* of battle—hats, shoes, cartridge-boxes, bayonet-scabbards, and canteens, are scattered all over the field.

Next we come to the ground held by our city brigade, composed of the 69th—"Paddy Owens' Regulars;" Baxter's Zouaves, the 72d; the 106th, Col. Morehead; and the 71st, or "California" regiment, commanded originally by Senator Baker, and subsequently, for a time, by our gallant townsman, Col. John Markoe. "The Philadelphia Brigade" upon this occasion was commanded by Brigadier-Gen. A. S. Webb, a *New Yorker*—one of the youngest officers of his rank in the service—and nobly was the honor of both the great cities upheld. In their charge, the left of the enemy's line struck ours just at this point, and so overwhelming, for the moment, was the shock, that the whole command was pushed rudely back; but, springing to the front instantly,

Webb quickly rallied his shrinking column and restored the fight.

Would that every organization conspicuous for courage and conduct could be particularized; but that would be to mention almost every regiment and battery engaged.

From here we have an excellent view of Seminary Ridge, the line of woods whence the rebels debouched, and the beautiful level fields over which they swept in their grand charge. What a magnificent battle-field! The heights of La Belle Alliance and Mont Saint Jean in some respects resemble our Cemetery and Seminary Ridges, with the same gently undulating valley intervening; but there the principal road runs at right angles, while here parallel, with the position.

Speaking of the bombardment which preceded the charge, Gen. Hancock says, "It was the most terrific cannonade I ever witnessed, and the most prolonged." A rebel eye-witness describes it thus: "I have never yet heard such tremendous artillery firing. The very earth shook beneath our feet, and the hills and rocks seemed to reel like a drunken man. For one hour and a half this most terrific firing was continued, during which time the shrieking of shells, the crash of falling timber, the fragments of rock flying through the air, shattered from the cliffs by solid shot; the heavy mutterings from the valley between

the opposing armies; the splash of bursting shrapnel, and the fierce neighing of wounded artillery horses, made a picture terribly grand and sublime."

After this came Pickett's charge, numbering some 20,000 men. It was made in two, some say three, lines of battle, with great coolness and steadiness. Our ninety guns, planted on the crest from the Cemetery to Round Top, "volley'd and thunder'd," and when the infantry joined in the chorus, so terrible was the fire that tore through the rebel ranks, so rapidly were men struck, and so singular their gyrations, that "it presented," says an officer, "the extraordinary spectacle of ten thousand men playing at 'leap-frog!'"

In spite of every effort, the flower of Lee's veterans, directed by their tried leaders, Garnett, Armistead, Kemper, Wright, Posey, and Mahone, failed in carrying our position, although they charged up to and, at one or two points, even over it. It has been asked, "What other than *Southern* troops would have made that charge?" Ay, sir, but what other than *Northern* have met and repulsed it? Northern endurance and pluck were more than a match for Southern impetuosity and dash.

"There swung the *pine* against the *palm*."

In the bloody ruck scores of their best officers went down. It was the turning point of the grand

drama, and, with the sun, on that 3d day of July, went down *the sun of the "Confederacy" forever!*

Although known as "Pickett's Charge," Gen. Graham, whom I met here yesterday, informs me that Pickett was not engaged in it. The General describes him as a coarse, brutal fellow, by whom he was treated with the greatest inhumanity whilst wounded and a prisoner in his hands.

The rebel corps commanders either did not expose themselves as freely as our own, or they had better luck, for none were hit, whilst we lost one killed, and two wounded. The story told in *Blackwood's Magazine* by Col. Freemantle, of the British army, who was present, may help to explain it. He says: "When I got close up to Gen. Longstreet, I saw one of his regiments advancing through the woods in good order. So thinking I was just in time to see the attack, I remarked to the General, 'I wouldn't have missed this for anything.' Longstreet was seated at the top of a snake-fence, at the edge of a wood, and looking perfectly calm and unperturbed. He replied, laughingly, 'The d—l you wouldn't! I would like to have missed it very much: we've attacked and been repulsed; *look there!*'"

We now crossed the Baltimore Pike, calling on the way at the small frame building, on the Taneytown road, used as Gen. Meade's headquarters on Friday. This will always be a point of great interest, as the

focus of that *feu d'enfer* before described, and one likely to be remembered by Gen. Meade and his staff to their dying day.

The house is sadly shattered, and the poor widow who owns it complains bitterly of her losses. "When I comes home, my house was all over blood; the sogers takes away my blankets and quilts, all my hay, and they spiled my apple-trees, my spring, and every ting." She says a few hundred dollars would be a great help to her, and thinks she should "git it from someveres."

Sure enough, why shouldn't she? In the garden of a cottage, in the little village of Waterloo, the visitor is shown the monument erected over the Marquis of Anglesea's leg, and the poor peasant has made quite a little fortune by exhibiting the boot cut from the leg, and the table upon which the amputation was performed. This hint might not be thrown away upon a more enterprising person, but I doubt whether this poor, frowsy German woman will ever profit by it.

To the right of Cemetery Hill was stationed the battery so furiously assailed by Hays' brigade of "Louisiana Tigers." The lunettes and traverses remain undisturbed and grass-grown.

The little eminence in front was held by that patriotic old soldier, Brig.-Gen. Wadsworth. He fell in the Wilderness, in May, '64.

The works thrown up by our men on Culp's Hill are still to be seen, except such portion of the timber as is being removed by the owner of the ground. Only think of the meanness of the man who is engaged in pulling these monuments to pieces, and converting them into fire-wood! I could not ascertain the name of the barbarian, else I would give it.

The effect of the furious fire poured upon Ewell's columns is visible enough. Hardly a tree or rock in front of these works has escaped. Many of the trees are covered and scarred with bullets as high as fifty feet from the ground. There was "wild" as well as deadly firing here on that Thursday night and Friday morning. Along this rough, rocky hill fought the "White Star Division," led by our own Geary, and that sturdy, honest fighter, Brig.-General Green. Four months later, at the desperate midnight battle of Wahatchie, in Lookout Valley, this same command again encountered a portion of Lee's army—Longstreet's corps—and added to the laurels gained at Antietam and Gettysburg.

An inscription on a tree in the ravine below tells the story of a mound close by—"To the right lie buried forty-five rebels." They sleep where they fell!

In the following communication to Governor Curtin, General Cutler tells us how the battle opened: "I owe a duty to one of your regiments, the 56th, and its brave commander, Col. J. W. Hofmann. It

was my fortune to be in the advance on the morning of July 1st. The atmosphere being a little thick, I took out my glass to examine the enemy. Being a few paces in rear of Colonel H., he turned to me and inquired, 'Is that the enemy?' My reply was, 'Yes.' Turning to his men, he commanded, 'Ready—right oblique—aim—fire!' and the battle of Gettysburg was opened. The fire was followed by other regiments instantly; still, that battle on the soil of Pennsylvania was opened by her own sons, and it is just that it should become a matter of history."

About a mile from the town is the ground fought over by our brave cavalrymen.

A passing tribute here to the "eyes of the army." In no preceding campaign had this arm rendered services at once so efficient and so distinguished. From the opening of the campaign in June, all through Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania—from the Rappahannock to Gettysburg, and back again to the Potomac; at Brandy Station, Beverly Ford, Aldie, Upperville, Middleburg, Hanover, Gettysburg, and Boonsboro'—they hewed their bloody way, bearing down all opposition, each combat a victory, until at last—so uniform was the result—it only became necessary to find the rebel Stuart to insure his overthrow.

Beyond the Seminary is the scene of the first day's struggle.

With the eye and the instinct of a true soldier,

General Reynolds saw how much depended on holding the advanced position until the heights in his rear could be occupied in force. He doubtless felt how great would be the cost, how unequal the struggle; but he knew his duty, and hesitated not to perform it, even at the peril of his life. Some absurd things have been said in censure of what his critics are pleased to call his "rashness;" but let us hope that some day full justice will be done to the man who, without stopping to count the odds, boldly flung his devoted troops full against the enemy, holding him at bay, and thereby accomplishing the great purpose for which he sacrificed himself and the brave men who died with him. Nay, more. Let it always be borne in mind, that, in precipitating the fight, he *fixed its locality*; thus settling, beyond peradventure, a point of no small importance in view of the prevailing doubts and perplexities of the hour.

The marks of battle still abound, but the interest centres in the spot where Reynolds was killed. He was nearly up with the skirmish line—no place, say military men, for the commander of a corps—"but that was like John Reynolds." He had just dispatched his aids, Captains Baird, Rosengarten, and Riddle, on special duties, and was himself watching the deployment of the Wisconsin Brigade, when he was struck in the neck and fell dead from his horse.

Poor Reynolds!

"There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee."

At last we reach the National Cemetery on Cemetery Hill. I pity the man who can stand unmoved in this silent city of the dead. Here are the precious offerings laid upon the altar of the country by the loyal States. Ordinarily, the process of filling up a cemetery is slow work—the work of years. *Three days and nights sufficed to fill this!* How those poor fellows toiled and struggled to get up in time to save the soil of a free State from the polluting tread of the invader! Here sleep those “unnamed demi-gods” of the rank-and-file. “Unknown!” “Unknown!” the only epitaph of hundreds. At our feet lies an *army!* Infantry, cavalry, and artillery, rank upon rank, in beautiful military array, as though awaiting the order to appear in review before the Great Commander-in-Chief of us all!

“Up many a fortress wall
 They charged, those boys in blue:
 ’Mid surging smoke and volley’d ball
 The bravest were the first to fall—
 To fall for me and you!
 Our brothers mustered by our side;
 They marched, and fought, and nobly died
 For me and you!
 Good friend, for me and you!”

Who can ever forget those three days of July, that period of agonizing suspense?

And when the news came, O how that sad catalogue pulled upon the heart-strings!

Reynolds, Zook, Weed, Willard, Vincent, Farnsworth, Card, Jeffards, Taylor, O'Rourke, Lowery, Cross, Hazlett, Adams, Miller, Arrowsmith, Deveaux, Larrabee, Davids, Block, Little, Repes, Locke, Dorrity, Chester, Watson, Chancellor, Leach.

"Period of honor as of woes,
What bright careers 'twas thine to close!
Mark'd on thy roll of blood what names,
To *Freedom's* memory, and to Fame's
Laid there their last immortal claims!"

So ends my story of Gettysburg.

G. J. G.

PHILADELPHIA, NOV. 1865.

APPENDIX.

LETTER FROM LIEUT.-COL. SYKES.

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS,
December 9, 1865.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRONICLE."

SIR:

In your Sunday issue of November 27, 1865, appears an article descriptive of the battle of Gettysburg, and signed "G. J. G., Philadelphia." In the course of it the writer steps aside to make a malicious attack upon myself, and to favor the public with other information which he alone seems to possess. In his communication he asserts that to "Birney's" call upon me for assistance I replied, "that I would be up in time," that "my men were tired, and were making coffee." Premising that General Birney was not in command of the Third Corps until late in the day, after General Sickels was wounded, it is enough for me to say that General Birney never made any such request, and that I never made any such reply; it is a pure fabrication, and those who know me know that such an answer would be foreign to my whole career as a soldier. While the Fifth Corps was massed on Rock Creek as a reserve, I received an order to send a brigade to the support of General Sickels, should he call for it. Accordingly, General Weed's brigade was detailed and held ready for this emergency. General Meade having desired to see the corps commanders at 3 P. M., I rode to his headquarters, on the Taneytown road, and during the interview he directed me to throw my whole corps immediately upon the left of our line, and hold it at all hazards. I at once despatched a staff officer to put the troops in motion—met two brigades of Barnes' division (Sweitzer's and Tilton's) as they crossed the Taneytown Pike, and posted them

myself in front of the ground held by a part of Birney's division, Third Corps. General J. H. H. Ward, of New York, was present when I had the conversation with General Birney which led to the posting of these troops. Instead, however, of a brigade, my whole command went to the support of the Third Corps; but the greater part of it was established upon and around "Little" and "Big Round Top," which was our true left, and the key of the day's battle. The movement began the moment an aide-de-camp could ride from general headquarters to where the corps was massed, and no other time was consumed, except that required to march it to the position assigned by the commanding general. Because the position was held with desperate gallantry by the Fifth Corps, our line of battle was not taken in reverse, and the day was saved. Every soldier understands that General Meade's order to move my whole corps to the left annulled any previous one contemplating the support of General Sickels with a brigade; but, further to show the temper and inaccuracy of "G. J. G.'s" statement; after General Weed reached "Little Round Top," and before he had seen me on my return from General Meade's headquarters—upon the call of General Sickels—he put his brigade, minus Garrard's regiment, *en route* to the support of the Third Corps, but was fortunately met and recalled by myself to Little Round Top, just in time to meet Longstreet's attack upon it. The second assertion of "G. J. G." (quoted from General Warren's testimony, and of which I know nothing) is as incorrect as might be expected. General Meade never gave an order for the Fifth Corps to advance, on the 3d of July, after Lee's repulse. I have in my possession every order affecting my command during that campaign, and no such order is in existence. Had General Meade intended an advance on that day, it is not probable, after its severe losses, that the Fifth Corps would have been selected for this service, when the Sixth Corps, General Sedgwick, lay comparatively fresh right behind me, and which, in fact, did take up the direct pursuit of the enemy when it began. On the morning of the 4th of July a reconnoissance was directed to be made along my front by a part of my corps, and Day's brigade, of Ayers' division, executed it.

An armed reconnoissance, in the presence of a stubborn and defiant enemy, is not an operation to be carried on rashly; but, whatever may have been its character, it was never, to my knowledge, questioned by any one having the right to do so.

I think the history of the Army of the Potomac, while I commanded the Fifth Corps, will show that it was neither slow to march nor fight; and, as it is commonly believed that the head of an organization infuses his own views and spirit over what he controls, I shall not quarrel with a hidden slanderer concerning opinions which he may borrow or make up. Lastly, it may not be out of place to say that General Meade wished to retain me in the Army of the Potomac upon its reorganization, in March, 1864, and told me in July last, at Gettysburg, that both he and the Lieutenant-General desired my return to it during its last glorious campaign.

The statements of persons ignorant of the true nature of military events seldom deserve any notice; but, in a matter so personal to myself as this, I cannot permit assertions to be made without characterizing them in their appropriate terms.

GEO. SYKES,

Lieut.-Col. U. S. Army, and

Major-General Volunteers.

REPLY TO GENERAL SYKES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE DAILY CHRONICLE," WASHINGTON.

SIR: I desire to say a word in reply to the communication of Major-General Sykes in your issue of December 19th. In giving the accompanying *extracts* from the testimony, I do it as briefly as possible, consistent with fairness; and this, I trust, will be accepted as an apology for trespassing upon so much of your valuable space. General Sykes has no one but himself to thank for the republication of this testimony; for how else could an humble civilian have repelled his opprobrious epithets? or how,

indeed, made any stand at all against a major general? It would appear that the General is entirely ignorant of that important document, published by order of Congress, the "Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War." (I would advise him to procure a copy; he will find it "handy to have in the house.")

In the first place General Sykes says: "General Birney never made any such request, and I never made any such reply. It is a *pure fabrication*, and those who know me know that such an answer would be foreign to my whole career as a soldier." Be that as it may, here is my *authority* for the statement. (The italics throughout are mine.) Report, 2d Session, 38th Congress, page 295, Major-General D. E. Sickels, sworn: * * * "General Meade said he would send up the Fifth Corps to support me. The Fifth Corps came up, *tardily*, to be sure. * * * My request to General Hancock was promptly met."

Page 366, Major-General D. B. Birney sworn: * * * "General Sickels told me that General Sykes would, at my request, send me a division to support me upon my left. I sent a staff officer to General Sykes, asking him to send me up at once the division that had been ordered from his corps to support me; that an attack was imminent, and that I thought it would be made at once. The staff officer saw him, and he returned for answer, *that he would come up in time; that his men were making coffee and were tired, but that he would be up in time.* He came up with one of his divisions in about an hour from that time, and formed upon my left upon Round Top, and placed Barnes' division massed behind my centre."

General Sykes says: "The second assertion of 'G. J. G.' (quoting from General Warren's testimony, and of *which I know nothing*) is as incorrect as might be expected." And, again: "General Meade never gave an order to advance on the 2d of July, after Lee's defeat. I have in my possession every order affecting my command during that campaign, and no such order is in existence." The General may be literally correct in saying "no such order is in existence;" but is it not *usual* for staff officers to carry *verbal* orders on the field of battle?

At all events, here is *my* authority for what I "*borrowed or made up,*" as charged. Page 376, Maj.-Gen. George K. Warren sworn: * * * "The troops under General Sykes arrived *barely in time to save Round Top* mill, (hill?) and they had a very desperate fight to hold it." * * * "And when the repulse of the enemy took place on that day (July 3d), General Meade intended to move forward all the forces he could get in line and assault the enemy in turn. He ordered an advance of the Fifth Corps, *but it was carried on so slowly* that it did not amount to much, if anything.

"*Question.* Who commanded that corps? *Answer.* General Sykes. Instead of advancing the whole of the Fifth Corps, I believe only about one brigade was advanced."

Page 403, Major-General W. S. Hancock sworn: * * * * "General Meade told me, before the fight, that, if the enemy attacked me, he intended to put in the Fifth and Sixth Corps on the enemy's flank. I, therefore, when I was wounded and lying down in my ambulance, and about to leave the field, dictated a note to General Meade, and told him if he would put in the Fifth and Sixth Corps I believed he would win a great victory. I asked him afterward, when I returned to the army, what he had done in the premiscs. *He said he had ordered the movement,* but the troops were slow in collecting, *and moved so slowly,* that nothing was done before night, except that some of the Pennsylvania Reserves went out and met Hood's division, it was understood, of the enemy, and actually overthrew it, assisted, no doubt, in some measure, by their knowledge of their failure in the assault."

The only misstatement I find I made was as to the point of time when the staff officer was sent to General Sykes by General Birney for the promised support. It was *before*, not *after*, the enemy's attack. In this connection, Mr. Editor, permit me to introduce entire the paragraph which has given so much offence. Here it is:—

"A word of criticism here. At one period of the battle, Birney, being hard pressed, called upon General Sykes, in command of the Fifth Corps, for assistance. Sykes had *been ordered* to support the Third if called upon, but he returned for answer that he 'would be up in time—that his men were

tired, and were making coffee!' They *did* come up in *about an hour*; and, says General Warren, in his testimony, 'the troops under General Sykes arrived barely in time to save Round Top, and they had a very desperate fight to hold it.' And again, of the operations next day: 'When the repulse took place, General Meade intended to move forward and assault the enemy in turn. He ordered an advance of the Fifth Corps, but it was *carried on so slowly* that it did not amount to much, if anything.' General George Sykes is a brave man, but entirely 'too slow;' so at least General Grant seemed to think, for, in the subsequent reorganization of the Army of the Potomac, the services of 'Tardy George' No. 2 were dispensed with. The Fifth, as a corps, has a glorious record, and never failed to fight bravely when properly handled."

How can this be tortured into the language of disparagement of the Fifth Corps, as General Sykes charges? The truth is, the Fifth Corps does not require the General's championship.

Everybody knows that, upon the very occasion in question, its fighting, *after being brought upon the field*, was *magnificent in the extreme*, and that it saved our left, and with it the day, on Thursday. And let me add, moreover, that I have yet to learn that censure of a commander is a reflection upon his men. Although I have not the honor to belong to the fighting class, I yield to none in admiration of our glorious army, and of the heroes whose deeds have illustrated its career. I love to talk about, read about, and sometimes scribble about their sacrifices, and their valor, and it was this feeling which prompted the unfortunate article on the "Battle-field of Gettysburg."

General Sykes will hardly deny my right, in a fair spirit, to comment upon his actions as a soldier. I did nothing more; yet he has characterized my criticism as a "malicious attack." "Malicious" in what? I acknowledged his personal bravery—handsomely, as I thought; but I sinned, it seems, in commenting upon his disposition to be "*slow*," and, in that respect, treading in the footsteps of his great exemplar, "Tardy George" No. 1. This is the "very head and front of my offending." Of the sneers at my ignorance of military affairs, I have no right to complain: for, you must know, Mr. Editor, I *was* simpleton enough to believe that Gen. Grant really *had control of the army*! That he had the power to detach, relieve or *retain* whomsoever he pleased; and that he had, in fact, *everything his own way*, without inter-

ference from any quarter! All of which, sir, did I most powerfully and potently believe. For so believing—for quoting fairly from the record, and for giving credence to the *sworn* testimony of four distinguished general officers—one sleeping in an honored grave—I am arraigned and stigmatized (in a style, let us hope, not common to the cloth) as a “*fabricator*” and a “*slanderer*.”

General Sykes, in the course of his communication—by way of a clincher, and with the most charming *naïveté*, tells the following story:—

“General Meade wished to *retain* me in the Army of the Potomac, upon its reorganization in March, 1864, and told me in July last, at Gettysburg, that both he and the Lieutenant-General *desired* my return to it in its last glorious campaign.”

What a shame that such amiable intentions should have been frustrated!

But by whom? Let us hear what the Lieutenant General has to say upon *this point*:—

Washington, May 18, 1865.—*Extracts from Lieutenant-General Grant's Testimony, page 524.*

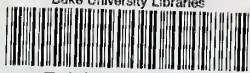
Question. “Has there ever been any misunderstanding with regard to the conduct of the war, *in any particular*, between you and the Secretary of War, since you have been in command?”

Answer. “Never any expressed to me. I never had any reason to suppose that any fault was found *with anything I had done*. So far as the Secretary of War and myself are concerned, *he has never interfered with my duties*; * * * * He has never dictated a course of campaign to me, and *never inquired what I was going to do*. He has always seemed *satisfied with what I did*, and has heartily co-operated with me.”

There, I think that will do. This controversy is not of my seeking, and, as I have no desire to prolong it at the expense of your columns, I shall most respectfully take my leave both of the subject and of Major-General Sykes.

G. J. G.

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